



Management? ...*Whatever**

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review of:

S. Crainer and D. Dearlove (eds.) (2001) *Financial Times Handbook of Management: On the State of the Art*, 2nd edition. London: Pearson. (HB: pp.800, £30, ISBN 0273643509)

The violence of that which forces thought develops from the *sentendum* to the *cogitandum*. Each faculty is unhinged, but what are the hinges if not the form of a common sense which causes all the faculties to function and converge? (Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*)

It is possible that we may come to speak of an encounter, an essential encounter, but in the form of an articulation that is barely known to our ears: cries and shrieks and primal screams, swoops and laughter, tears and bellyache. The *Financial Times Handbook of Management* offers not so much an introduction to the thinking and practice of contemporary management, nor a summary of the field, but what amounts to a shrewd and subtly disguised *pharmacological* experiment. Be warned – *Abandon hope all ye who enter here*. Respect. Do not expect to come out at the other end of this *tour de force*, the same person you think you might have been on entering. Insofar as the text removes all prospect of dialectical synthesis and denies the opportunity for a position of neutral intermedium or transcendent *supervision*, we will have no place within which and from where we can measure such metamorphosis and change. A most peculiar, place(less) spacing then, that, furthermore, cannot even offer the possibility of asking such questions for it would, from *this side* of our logic, make no sense to do so (presumably). Which makes (this) review (im)possible. Take your dog tags, invest in maps and tattoos, pack photographs of home. *Tour de force?* This is going to be more like a 'tour of duty' – a progressive infolding thousands of 'clicks' deep into a presumed enemy territory, teeming with strange flora and fauna, ghosts of Marlow, faltering voices from the past, and the silence of the infinite, punctuated by flickers and shards of an ephemera-to-come in a veritable drama at the heart of darkness.

We are being sent into a *delerium tremens* in our efforts to come to some kind of terms with this text, but what will prove to be an essential *délire* (Lecerclé, 1985) in securing

* I would like to acknowledge the help of two anonymous *ephemera* referees in revising this paper.

access and passage through this phantasmagorical collection and exhibition (see Benjamin, 1999: esp. pp.22, 116, and *passim*; Cohen, 1993: 227-59). Crainer and Dearlove's edited volume marks a possible end to those reviews and readings formed out of an established critical repertoire, theory familiar to students of *ephemera* – whether this be post-marxist, or neo-marxist critical theory, what passes for poststructuralism and deconstruction, or a psychodynamic reading that identifies the text as some kind of prosthetic transference object for the collective succour of management in today's financial times. A cry for help, though, it certainly is. Yet this handbook proves resistant to the very conventions of reading and thinking; and, not only or *simply* resistant, but transformative – and in this respect this text deserves the credit for producing a truly radical and subversive intervention in the field of management and organisation.

The exact repercussions of this event can only be dimly surmised, but there is probably little exaggeration in the claim that this volume smuggles its contraband through the perimeters of our 'paramount reality' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) to discharge its viral dehiscence in waves of endless proliferation, migration, and miscegenation. In what follows we will attempt to subject this dissemination machine to a series of established critical readings, but all will be found wanting, for this volume only makes sense for another kind of logic; some may dare call it a 'post-human' logic.

Subverting Critique

The *Financial Times Handbook of Management* must be, without doubt, one of the most radical, audacious, and extreme conceits to have been devised. In response, a number of methods of reviewing are immediately suggestive and, at first sight, promising. One could read this text, for example, from the position of an outraged highbrow mandarin scholar grappling with despair at the further infiltration into the academy of an instrumental and utilitarian agenda. The Handbook brings together established and prestigious names from the world of the university who need little or no introduction – including Warren Bennis, Andrew Kakabadse, D. Quinn Mills, and John Storey – together with consultants and freelance commercial, private sector commentators, analysts and writers. Stephen Coomber is a freelance business researcher and writer, for example, and Shere Hite is an 'internationally renowned thinker on human relationships and sexuality'. Some contributors can boast of a distinguished history in global advertising – Sam Hill, for example, co-founder of the New York and Chicago based *Helios Consulting*, who lists as credentials his previous role as vice chairman and strategy officer of *DMB&B* – a 'top 20 global advertising agency' – and partner and chief marketing officer at *Booz-Allen & Hamilton*. Others share equally impressive curriculum vitae. Anthony M. Santomero is the current president of the *Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia*. Harold Rose, in addition to his Emeritus Professorship at the *London Business School*, is the head of economic intelligence at Prudential Assurance and director of *The Economist*, and Peter Lorange, who is the President of the *International Institute for Management Development* based in Laussane, Switzerland.

Our senior, tenured college don, offering his review, then, would doubtless balk at this heteroclit assembly of usurers and money grubbers. With its bold subtitles and convenience packaging, designed for short attention spans and those who want to read as a form of consumption and immediate gratification, this volume can only offer consternation and despair. One can only imagine the sheer horror of this reviewer confronted by what for many appears to be utter banality and simplicity, presenting such a confused mix of prescription and description that it is never clear what is intended by the author, what is actually meant, what is really being said, or really what is even there by accident or design. This text displays all the analytical rigour of a sensational front-page tabloid exposé of some second division media celebrity fallen-on-hard-times. The juvenile grammar is itself a marvel to behold, a text so full of non-sequiturs, amphigouri, imbecility, spurious logic, and – lets be clear here – sheer *folly*, that it would be no surprise if our reviewer was confined to bed for an indefinite period of rest and recuperation. Writing that is littered with such a cornucopia of media friendly sound-bites, catch-phrases, column after column of the ubiquitous bullet-point, and its excruciatingly embarrassing graphics and diagrams, that just about reproduce the whole gamut of textual vulgarity dispensed by today's mass market publishers, would pose a challenge to even the most experienced and hardy reader of trashy pulp – let alone our high patrician academic. There are few reviewers left who would support this model of reviewing and fewer still who would be prepared to commit to print such a potentially slanderous diatribe: a case of logophilia diarrhoea, or logorrhoea.

Instead, particularly in the context of this journal, one might expect to read a review informed by developments in critical management studies, or an application/extension of what has become known, perhaps unfortunately, as 'postmodernised' organisation analysis. Other interested reviewers might approach this handbook from a perspective in 'marxisant' industrial relations (Hyman, 1989: 127), neo-pluralist employment relations, or neo-marxist, 'materialist' studies of the labour process. Doubtless the *British Journal of Management* and the *Journal of Management Studies* will publish reviews that interrogate the empirical veracity of the interpretations and analysis offered in the collection. Here one might expect to see reviewers raise questions concerning the reliability, generalisability, and applicability of the findings and prescriptions. The 'funky model' of organisational design, for example, that is heterarchical, leveraged, innovative, and focused, in which "playgrounds ...gradually replace the pyramids" (Nordstrom and Ridderstrale, p.65), is likely to be seen as fanciful and unrealistic in the context of the growth and internationalisation of the call centre and the expansion of employment in low paid, part-time, and insecure forms of manual labour.

The *Financial Times Handbook* is also easily dismissed within the framework and analysis provided by the Frankfurt School-inspired critical management studies and from a perspective developed out of a reading of poststructural and deconstructive theory. Alvesson and Willmott (1996) would help us to see how the text is a media and outcome of a systematically distorted field of communicative action and in its reduction of management to a set of discrete and autonomous, technicised activities, contributes to a reification of management practice and the denial of 'organisation' as an arena of inequality, conflict and struggle. Where Birchall writes that executive "management has to create a vision of where it wants the organisation to go and then agree an appropriate strategy for getting there" and that "this will lead to a streamlining of the organisation to

increase its focus and long-term profitability” (p.130), critical management studies would expose how such a simplistic conception of organisation helps serve dominant power interests at the expense of a more egalitarian, collective reconstruction of organisation. The sanitised tone of Birchall’s discourse and the assumption of a value-neutral Reason, is only a thin disguise for the perpetuation of suffering and poverty, one that denies genuine debate over purpose, meaning, and value, a debate that can only be realised through an extended collective participation. ‘Streamlining’, for example, would be better translated as redundancy, a phenomena that entails enormous social, economic, and psychological damage, consequences that management routinely denies and prefers to ignore. Moreover, Birchall, typical of all of the contributors to this volume, persists with this idea that ‘organisation’ is an entity or ‘thing’, in which it makes sense to talk about ‘it’ as if ‘it’ had ‘interests’ for itself, that is, that organisation pre-exists, in some way, the representational efforts of its differentially positioned participants.

This is the fallacy of what critical theorists call ‘reification’, the perpetuation of which serves only to bolster the naturalisation of ideological distortion as mundane, everyday common-sense. Similarly, the simplistic equation of cause-effect and its application to action in organisation, as if organisation could be under the simple directive authority of some cohesive cadre of managerial strategists, reproduces an impoverished understanding of what are complex and dialectical force-fields, processes and dynamics at work in organisation. More developed accounts from a critical theory perspective might also interpret this publication as part of what Alvesson and Willmott (1996: 103) call ‘cultural doping’.¹ For Alvesson and Willmott cultural doping is understood more in the terms of an orchestrated, self-conscious, agency driven managerial campaign that works in part on the conscious but also, in large part, on the unconscious dimensions of subjectivity and identity. Texts such as Crainer and Dearlove only assist in the naturalisation and normalisation of a very narrow, one-dimensional managerial reality, a form of ‘training’, in effect, that works to cultivate the right orientations, values, and ideals, amongst its readership and management audience. In sum, the positive, up-beat tone of the contributions to this volume, which presents management as an exciting, practicable, and efficacious exercise, enacts, in part, a defensive denial and to some extent a public relations exercise, a flight of fancy that belies the ideological engineering that motivates research and publications of this kind.

A review of Crainer and Dearlove motivated by popular forms of ‘textbook’ deconstruction, on the other hand, might concentrate on the denial and repression of that which is un-manageable, disorganising, and disruptive of sense and meaning in the text. Here, we would seek to identify the role of critical nodal points distributed throughout the writings of the contributors around which this displacement is mobilised – textual moments that, at the same time, unwittingly reveal the trace of this attempted excise and exclusion. What has become known as the modern, western episteme of knowledge, through which the discourse of managerial research and writing such as this *Financial Times Handbook* has itself been formed, is organised around a series of artificially separated conceptual oppositions, polarities, and dualisms (see for example Cooper,

1 Critical management studies show some sensitivity to this idea of texts as ‘pharmacological’ experiments, which we will develop later.

1989; Chia, 1996; Knights, 1997). This has the effect of unduly stabilising phenomena through an occluded process of hierarchicisation and categorisation that provides the reassurance of our everyday, familiar world-shared-in-common, a world which remains an assumption and illusion, or indeed collective *delusion* that persists in part because it has become so familiar that it is no longer seen. The conventional categories that serve as the 'foundations of management', in section two of Crainer and Dearlove, commit this 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' (Whitehead, 1978: 18ff; cf. Whitehead, 1985, chapter three), separating management into such routine divisions as 'Strategy', 'Managing Human Resources', 'Marketing', and 'Finance'. Once we begin to carefully read the chapters that have been designed to be contained within each of these categories, however, the 'repressed' returns as we begin to discover glitches and inconsistencies. The more rigorously we read, the more dissonance appears, for example, between the putative 'container' and the 'contained'. So much so that towards the extreme, routine oppositions begin to oscillate and migrate, even reversing their polarity to leave a suspended, undecidable realm of meaning and significance.

Let us consider, as an example, part two of this book, which is titled 'The foundations of management'. Here, Costas Markides opens the proceedings with a discussion around strategy that raises the question in its title 'What is strategy and how do you know if you have one?' (p.230). Immediately, despite Markides efforts to elide this complexity, we have, for a section putatively about the *foundations* of management, a rather unusual and perplexing epistemological and ontological problematic. We will disregard, for the time being, the problem of this 'you' indicated in the title (is it stating the all-too-obvious to suggest that this 'you' is simply a humble reader?). Confusion and complexity rapidly ensue when we read in Markides that it is 'top management' whom are the decision makers in choosing which strategic idea to enact (p.234). It would seem that far from being a foundation *of* management, then, management must be there in place, in role, *beforehand*, after which along comes strategic options from which management chooses what they believe to be the most promising. Yet, on further inspection, the text subsequently reveals that it is 'companies' that develop strategies (p.231), and then, on the very same page, in perfect *mise-en-abyme*, it is 'strategy' itself that "must decide on a few parameters", and further, "strategy must put all our choices together to create a reinforcing mosaic" (p.236). What strange actor this 'strategy' has become! The concept of strategy has undergone a strange migration and metamorphosis in the development of this text. From a phenomena that supposedly provides a support or foundation for management, we discover that it is something that management has to partly invent, adopt, and enact. Strategy is clearly less than a foundation and more like an outcome or culmination of management practice. However, by some bizarre reversal, strategy itself comes to assume the features of an animate, self-acting, conscious phenomena. The *contained* – strategy as a sub-category of foundations – has seemingly out-grown its confines to almost usurp the role of *container*, the part leaps over the whole, so to speak, so that the foundations of management are now, seemingly, the product, the *dependent* sub-component, of strategy. We are left with the apparently absurd ('inside-out') conclusion that strategy could well be a foundation of management, one that acts itself, moreover, like a strange *Doppelgänger* of

management.² Paradoxically, this does in fact confirm the declared intentions of the text *despite the conscious and best efforts of its author*. All kinds of reversals, displacements, confusions and transgressions are taking place here.

Alternatively, we could say that this author simply does not know what they are talking about.³ It should, therefore, come as no surprise that when it comes to empirical research, particularly ethnographic and participant forms of critical action-research, we are provided with findings that confirm the on-going confusion and miscegenation of boundaries emerging out of the actual practice of management and organisation, further undermining the classificatory neatness and 'organisation' performed by texts such as this (see, for example, Latour, 1996; Law, 1994; Watson, 1994).

Pataphysical Slide: Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough

The Crainer and Dearlove volume simply submits and yields to such critiques, it lays down, or bends over – despite its sturdy spine, and celebrates those failings identified by the critical resources of marxism, poststructuralism, and deconstruction. It is not merely the case that this text is unworthy of such heavyweight, high-minded seriousness, rather it would appear that it is able to quite neatly side-step, whilst incorporating, these readings. Indeed it is almost as if the text cocks a snook at such readings, a deliberate bravado and provocation that actually *invites* these critiques and dismissals. How else is one to read the interpretation made of Weber in Peters' chapter (pp.25-7)? In contrast to Marx, we are told that "Weber offered a more pragmatic view – the subjugation of individuals to organisations was reality" (p.25). Developing her theme, Peters goes on to write that the "machine's aim was to work efficiently: no more, no less" (p.26). How many first year undergraduate essays have we painstakingly corrected and annotated for committing such a range of gross errors: reification; over-generalisation; lack of textual care; leaving the concept of efficiency unproblematised and without definition; meanwhile informing the student that subjugation is not a conditional clause enacted by agents of organisation, and requesting some elaboration on this term 'reality'. Five out of ten, could do better. As for Yip's 'hexagon of competitive advantage' (p.255), we would be reaching for our red pen in despair to remind our student that anecdote and reportage is no basis for generalisation or model building. Professor of Strategic and International Management at the London Business School he may well be, but we all need reminding of the dangers of speculative free-will, lazy generalisation, the importance of epistemological clarification, the dangers of positivism, and the problem of prejudice dressed up as theory.

2 To push this further we might then think about the possibility of another category mistake, namely the anthropomorphic projections of the all-too-human writer or reader in attributing a form of existence and behavioural mode of logic of the human to its other, namely, in this case 'strategy'.

3 The reader may find the rest of the paper 'somewhat tedious and repetitious', at least if one reviewer of this paper is correct. Others may sense that something is being missed.

We do not have space to offer further illustrations of the deployment of these *agent-provocateur* techniques; suffice to say that the puerility, frivolity, and excess, must form part of a quite deliberate, pataphysical strategy on a par with Jarry's Ubu series, where we meet characters such as (rendered in English) 'Dogpile', 'Wallop', 'McClub', 'Barmpot Gripshit', 'Swankipants the Banker', and 'Sergeant Pisseasy'. In the *Financial Times Handbook* we meet a similar entourage of characters, objects, subjects, and events (the distinctions are left wonderfully ambiguous): from 'Funky Inc', to 'stretch people'; 'incubators' and the 'bottom up process'; 'skunkworks', 'fluid talent pool', and 'current reality' (as opposed to '*raisonne de real*', perhaps?); all of whom can take pride of place alongside their Jarryesque relatives. Disposable, makeshift concepts and esoteric, portmanteau words accumulate, agglomerate and take flight in a carnivalesque riot that parodies and dramatizes the surreal and delirious production of commodities and services proffered by contemporary 'casino capitalism' (Strange, 1998). Failing this interpretation, one might be forced to conclude that these authors simply do not care. However, so radical is this writing, in fact, that this volume only *takes on* the appearance of one of those utterly contemptuous, cynical and dumbed-down, mass market publications that provide nothing but misery and suffering for its readership. There can be few who would hesitate to confirm that, at least in its own genre, this volume clearly competes with that pantheon of infamous literary hoaxes: Shakespeare; *Orbis Tertius*; Castaneda; certain Chinese encyclopaedias; Nat Tate; the Sokal affair, etc.; and, more recently, Huczynski and Buchanan (O'Doherty and Case, 2003). Moreover, if it were not for the humour and self-deprecation of the contributors to this edited volume, we may have been complaining of an arrogant assumption to this elevated class of pranksterism. That they avoid this arrogance and genuinely write with the innocence and naiveté of a new-age cult member is a marvellous achievement.

Indeed, from the very outset the handbook announces this intent, and given the title of its opening chapter, 'The *Rise* of Management' (emphasis added), only the most pedestrian of reader will fail to suspect something is amiss. Associating on the possible intimations and implications of this title rapidly leads to a condition that can only be described as one of awe and stupefaction. So close to 'ruse', one can't help wondering if there are devotees and initiates who will immediately grasp the true significance of this contribution to management education. Lacanian inspired readings will not fail to make the connection to 'the phallus'. Marxist industrial relations scholars, on the other hand, may be invited to index their reading in terms of class struggle and the distributive inequalities of surplus value and the labour process. Students of humour and organisational badinage might lift an eyebrow at the idea of a 'rise', as in who is getting a rise out of who?, whilst more deconstructionist inspired writers might note the homonymous 'absent-presence' of the word 'wry'. However, in true mantric fashion – or perhaps in mockery of those populist reductions of management practice to a series of mantra sounding soundbites – repeated to oneself sufficient times, its secret palimpsest begins to echo as 'wise', and wise this book certainly is.

'The Rise of Management' straight away lulls you into a false sense of security as it opens with a tetravalent *hors d'oeuvre* of quotations by Drucker, Mintzberg, and Fayol. Familiar territory, *or so you might think*. By the time one has read through to the final word on page 784, those opening words of Drucker seem oddly double-edged, reversible, if not faintly palindromic, "Management means, in the last analysis, the

substitution of thought for brawn and muscle, of knowledge for folklore and superstition, and of cooperation for force” (p.3; see Drucker, 1974). There can be few words in management that compete with this seamless, Roussel-like interfold of narrative significance and meaning (Roussel, 1995; see Foucault, 1987), which seems to mirror if not anticipate that double-talk of more contemporary managerial discourse, where, as Willmott (1993) writes, we are persuaded to think ‘Strength is ignorance’ and ‘slavery is freedom’. At first one naturally assumes that Drucker must mean that brawn and muscle represents the antiquity of management, but as one thinks a little further, perhaps it is more accurate to say that, because history does not simply *progress*, what Drucker might mean is that in fact we can look *forward* to the eclipse of reason and thought and the return of a more immediate and visceral managerial regime, ruled by bullying, fear, and intimidation. As one reads forward through Crainer and Dearlove, in ever increasing fear and trembling, the text itself certainly seems to stage a series of similar reversals that compels a regression of sorts – as we shall see – but we can never be sure if the tone is one of irony, parody, or even celebration. The idea of ‘substitution’ in this opening quotation from Drucker works both ways and provides a leitmotif that haunts the rest of the volume. In deconstructive terms, we might say it has a *supplementary* and *undecidable* quality. So much so, in fact, that any sustained study causes the poles of the opposition to resonate ever more rapidly, intensifying to a moment of equivalence that sets up that old *perpetuum mobile* thought loop, leaving those of us immersed in Baudrillard, wide eyed and agape, staring into infinity, seemingly fascinated and bored in equal measure. There is a lesson and a warning here for the profound disorientation staged in the main body of this text.

So obvious is this ploy that on returning to these choice words by Drucker one feels the compulsion to kick oneself. *Of course*, you shriek. It’s so obvious! The very first few words of the volume tell you precisely what is going to happen: Reversals. Transgression. Disorientation. The collapse and inadequacy of reason. Undecidability. However, it is a testament to the creative elegance and control of Crainer and Dearlove that the text is structured and measured in such a way that it only *slowly* dawns upon the reader what is actually happening. This volume is a triumph of pace, rhythm and control. Only at the end can one return to the beginning and appreciate the subtlety invested in the production and presentation of this text. So, to reach the end of this book one must turn the *end over*, quite literally stitching together the final section – ‘When two worlds collide’ (pp.725-51) – with what we had first, naturally, taken to be the exordium, ‘Current Reality’ and ‘The Rise of Management’, to form an eternal return of sorts which then casts into relief role of this text as a generator of difference and repetition (Deleuze, 1994).⁴ Magic! In so doing, one works towards the re-commencement of the circle and, in this commitment to work, one also remains, therefore, always displaced, un-ready, and yet-to-come to fulfilment, identity, and completion. Perfect! To permit this book to do its work, then, one must first learn to take this book from *behind*, *a tergo*, so to speak – or to allow this book to take you from behind,⁵ *a rebours* (see Huysmans, 1884), by surprise and unawares (cf.: Derrida,

4 More exactly we need to twist the two ends of the volume as we attach them end-to-end to form a möbius strip.

5 The desire to kick oneself in the behind might be seen as a twisted, albeit erotic, early-warning sign of the movement and play of forces mobilised and amplified by this text.

1993). Behind, displaced to one side, *and* yet-to-come, this is quite clearly an invidious and disorientating 'position' from which to read this text or to seek to take back its lessons into the practice of management. It must be part of that 'rise' which is management today – the irony, the forked-tongue, the inside joke. Incoming, from behind oneself: one of the lessons of this text is that we are always waiting to catch up with ourselves, as if a part of ourselves, an 'envoy', of sorts, has been sent out into the future; which means that the *re-view* must itself have to wait in limbo. Sent out or captured by the future, the 'view' is no longer; it has been taken from us, and so it can make little sense to think about a *re-view* at the same time that it must make review and repetition *originary*, in some sense. After the end(s) of the book – and the ends of the reader assumed by and co-implicated in this historico-contingent textual form⁶ – performed in this text, we can, perhaps, only hope to form a view looking behind. In sum, we may have to learn to use our rear-view mirrors if we want to go on seeing at all.⁷

Meta-forces and metaphors

With these questions and struggles one rapidly finds oneself assuming the role of a 'character' in the drama of this handbook of management – a theatrical production scripted by appeals to 'agility', improvisation, 'adhocracy', and what can only be, presumably, the *blarney*⁸ of the 'shamrock' organisation (pp.96ff).⁹ We have been made

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- 6 Ends which are proving 'end for end' and side-by-side, leading to the confusion of upside-down and inside-out. These mark out some of the baroque outfoldings and consequences of the Deleuzian difference-repetition generator, textual threads and lines of flight that we are being asked to carry and bear.
- 7 However, recent developments that identify and critique what is called the ocularcentric prejudice of the modern western episteme (see Levin, 1993; Hoskin, 1995; Jay, 1993) is suggestive of the operation of forces and movements that, in order to access or come to some kind of terms, compel a move beyond the familiar sensory constitution of the all-too-human. Following Nietzsche, we might ask what 'views' might come from hearing, from touch, taste, or from a more 'synaesthetic' becoming of the human sensorium (see Massumi, 2002)? Is there not now an urgent need to re- envision vision, instead of simply submitting to a disembodied viewing? I can assure the reader that this book tastes truly awful.
- 8 And this, here, this Morphean reviewing, perhaps little more than an obsession, a quest for the apostrophe in organisation, the ' of *O'Doherty*, that joint and division, the tonsil clapper of occlusion in Derrida's *Glas* (1986), of possession and dispossession, paternity and filiation. Hence this quest for that which plays *between*, the coming of a volatile intermedium, the *achievement* of the humus of organisation (see Cooper, 2003), all that which interrupts and suspends, the pregnant pause, the *hic-up* of organisation as it turns on its wheels of structuration, object and subject, structure and agency.
- 9 A new theatrics becomes the space of a possible, emergent new theorising in organisation analysis, where in actual fact it would be more correct to say that the Greek God Theo is *falling* rather than rising, as implied in theo-rising. If Theo falls, along with *horao*, which means 'to look at something attentively', according to Heidegger's etymological deconstruction of Plato's Greek (Heidegger, 1977: 164-5), then old ways of looking and the preoccupation with the light of illumination, distinction, and separation, may give way to a twilight that demands a more embodied, sensuous relationship with the phenomena of organisation. Here we might return to some notion of 'dispatch' and 'envoy', of a traveller in foreign lands, which is also available, if now forgotten, in the Greek 'theoretician'.

a problem in opening and entering this text – and this problematisation forms an important part of a subtle pedagogic apprenticeship staged by Crainer and Dearlove, designed, we may infer, to circumvent disciplinary limitations on learning and the complex, existential defence-mechanisms elaborated collectively and individually in response to what Bion (1962) calls our ‘hatred of learning’. The linguistic innovation, the hypertrophied conceptual productivity, the dizzying leaps of imagination, the speed of the arguments, the graphics and diagrams, combine to mount a sensual onslaught, stimulating its prey first into excitement and then into a state of exhaustion and ennui. No longer simply a passive reader, nor even a more actively, critically-engaged reader, this text provides a passport outside the limitations of disembodied reading or study. It is at this stage that we may find ourselves as reviewers and readers scattered, the text itself becoming agency, as we slip into regions of a post-human logic, an ‘ambulatory automatism’ (Hacking, 1999) with unpredictable consequences.

Initially we become aware of the scripted *act* that is reading or reviewing as the rules and procedures of its discipline slowly distil, cast into a penumbra of recognition. Once made available in this way we have the opportunity to become aware of the inauthenticity¹⁰ of much of our comportment and behaviour. Crainer and Dearlove provide, then, what is perhaps the first *limit-text* in management writing. It could be the most rigorous introduction and test of management we have at the moment. It takes away our scripts and rules that for-all-practical purposes allow us to carry-on (see Garfinkel, 1967); eventually it robs us of our very credulity and leaves us bereft, stripped bare, stuttering with inarticulacy, howling and shrieking in a world that does not seem our own. Aaghhh! Eeiijjeek!Uuukkuujh...*I hear you.*

This leaves the review in a quandary, of sorts. The danger of a review is that it often deprives the reader of the experience of discovery, and especially for a text such as this, where the pedagogic instruction works in the background like a machinic shadow, too much revealing of the mechanics will cancel the possibility of apprenticeship. For, in a climate of cleverness, irony, ‘knowingness’, and heightened self-consciousness, it is doubtless the return to apprenticeship that holds out the most promising if not the *only* possibility for learning and development. The textual and narrative strategies employed in this volume by Crainer and Dearlove is strongly suggestive that the authors have grasped one of the most ineluctable problems of contemporary management education, namely how to pierce the carapace of self-defence offered by commercially cultivated forms of ego-centric flight and narcissism. Not only by revealing the end of the book, but in its subtle ‘preparation’ of the reader for the text – its genealogical exercise of location and placement, and the tracing of predecessors and influence – the review, typically, tends to flatten out that event which is the possibility of learning, learning through otherness, alienation, interruption and discontinuity. On reading this text we are made aware that up to this point we might have been silently managed all along. This text edited by Crainer and Dearlove provides ways of thinking through these unthought dimensions of management and the limitations it imposes on contemporary organisation and management practice. Its pedagogy begins with the very attempt to review it and its unbearable lightness of being.

10 The experiential deconstruction of authenticity/inauthenticity is still a long way off.

Oblique Ambulation: The environment announces itself afresh

Weighing in at a little less than 950 grams, this heavyweight 'handbook' demands the support of a book chair, or a reading table, an investment I was promptly encouraged to make after little more than thirty-three minutes of reading this text. Curiously enough, he had only recently seen an advertisement for an inclined reading table in the classified section of the Saturday edition of the Financial Times. Little could he have seen then how this was only the humble incunabula of what was to become a bizarre and labyrinthine exodus that would further call into crisis the very possibility of scholarly *re-view*. That 'I' of which he speaks can only be sustained up to the point at which it becomes the 'eye' of a storm, a pawn in the centre of some vast international conspiracy and Manichean intrigue involving arms shipments, double-agents, celluloid Latino street pimps and dark, east-European bob-haired femme fatales, illegal-drug cartels, Liverpoolian 'robber-barons' (see Maffesoli, 1996), cash for questions, and the Nike swoosh, 'Just Do It'. Behind the façade of globalization, the wired generation of flows, signs, and simulacra, the aesthetics of culture, logo and corporate branding, we find this darker, more disturbing world. Is management the glue that binds together this complex stage-play? The runners and gophers? The middle-men and women? Or are they the rather more benign, half-innocent public relations officers, unknowing double-agents themselves only dimly aware, through some dark glass, of the forces they modulate and the nefarious inchoate they re-present? Who would go so far as to suggest 'idiot-savants'?

Our suspicion should have been raised at the outset by the Contents, usefully listed on pages *vii* through *x* where, as if surreptitiously placed by some 'deep throat' agent commissioned on behalf of the forces of a Deleuzian dark-precursor (Deleuze, 1994: 119-24), we are introduced to the prospect of 'Funky Inc.', the 'shamrock' organisation, the 'strategic inflection point', 'talent wars', 'customer stretch', 'corporate religion', 'leveraging intellect', the 'incubator', and 'thought leadership'. Blimey! Reader, I fear this book might have fallen into the wrong hands. We are clearly going to need, in what follows, all the resources of a 'sympathetic magic' (Taussig, 1993).

Before the decision to purchase a prosthetic reading aid, I had just read the sentence, on page 40 of Georgina Peters chapter, 'Creating the modern organization': "Perhaps Welch was too brutal, but there is no denying that by the end of the 1980s GE was a leaner and fitter organization". The irony was only too telling. I was exhausted, ashamed by my quite obvious lack of virility and strength. It was as if the text was waiting for me, as if some 'Andon' light had suddenly shifted from green to orange, accompanied by a shrill intermittent alarm alerting the cadre of review managers and supervisors that O'Doherty LC07091967 was in need of some discipline and punishment. Was he even up to the task of reviewing this book? Was he sufficiently lean and fit enough? In the wider world of work organisation, repetitive strain injury might be the equivalent of an earlier asbestos crisis in health and safety and the subsequent cause of many a managerial nightmare, but for this reviewer it was pain bordering on chronic fatigue syndrome that was the most visceral reminder of this 'state of the art' in management. The sheer physical strength required to hold this 'handbook' would surely have been a test even for Martin Johnson, the triumphant captain of England's 2003 rugby world cup winning team. Yet, like the broken hammer, of which

Heidegger speaks in *Being and Time*, that breaks the spell of a utilitarian, familiar worldly absorption for the Black Forest carpenter, the loss of this book's readiness-to-hand brings "to the fore the characteristic of presence-at-hand in what is ready-to-hand ... It becomes 'equipment' in the sense of something which one would like to shove out of the way" (Heidegger, 1962: 104).

The accident that ruptures the inter-nested contextual spheres of involvement, meaning, and being, thus provides an occasion to recall a totality of 'references and assignments', to make it 'available' now – and perhaps only temporarily – as a *contingent* possibility. "Our circumspection comes up against emptiness, and now sees for the first time *what* the missing article was ready-to-hand *with*, and what it was ready to hand *for*. *The environment announces itself afresh*" (*ibid.*: 105; emphasis added in last sentence). One makes an oblique slide, or the gravity of an oblique ambulation starts up, a line of flight taking us elsewhere, a strange *Abgeschiedenheit* that offers a suspension from where we may tarry with a looming present-at-hand. The heavy-book-become-sore-limbs, becomes a 250mm x 160mm x 45mm lump of uncanny, ominous tomb-like black rectangle, a veritable Latourian 'black box', or a discarded clump of tar-black coal that rolls across the kitchen table rather like Heathcliff announced his arrival in *Wuthering Heights* (Bronte, 1965).¹¹ We might best 'review' this book, then, only once we have stolen into our university study following suspension without pay, after-hours, late at night and all alone, the low-drone of the computer hum our only companion, a network *wiring* that disturbs the resonating systemic circulation of the ego-bound synthesis that is the *Dasein* of the academic 'reviewer'. It all asks rather a lot of the 'Biddles' binding spine, that hinge which enfolds this tomb before us; perchance, it enquires into the capacity of the book to *manage* that which it has unleashed.

Stretched Review

I was party to a curious encounter at our local Suntop Media Furnishings shop whilst seeking to purchase my reading table, what I later discovered was called an interrupted proactive 'customer service interception', or what Sandra Vandermerwe in her chapter in this volume – (still-badly)-at-hand – calls the 'customer lock-on' (p.432). Painful as it might sound this was in fact, as it turned out, the occasion for quite a peculiar, and not altogether unpleasant, *frisson*. I entered the capacious, open-planned and colourful interior of the shop, smiling to myself as I recalled several passages from Benjamin's *Arcades Project*,¹² and made my way towards a display of book supports, wooden

11 In a sequel to this review, for Crainer and Dearlove surely demands such attention, I intend to subject this artefact to a series of laboratory tests. Not only is it important to carbon date this publication more accurately, but it might be useful to test some of its more general physical properties – quality of resistance to a speeding bullet; 'floatation' capacity; acoustical dampening quality – especially useful if this object is to be used to prop up student hi-fi speakers; and perhaps its response-elasticity (chi-square revised) to the Heimlech-Lawson test for aubergine pressing.

12 Specifically, convolute A3,6; A3a,7; A12,5; and convolute O2,1; the latter of which I later realised had been an unfortunate mistake when I was able to consult Benjamin on returning to my study. Why I had made this association remains a mystery, though the careful reader will surely see a subliminal connection with Vandermerwe's idea of a 'customer stretch' (p.431).

lecterns, podiums and pulpits, and what *looked like* a collection of acutely angled plastic braces or callipers, recalling some ghoulish medieval torture chamber. I was quite obviously being followed, if not by the writings of Benjamin, then the store's security cameras, so I feigned an air of casual indifference and, expressing no interest in this exhibition, headed, instead, towards the shimmering reds, the blues, and greens, of what I assumed to be the contemporary designs of the desk lectern. Little more than half-way towards the conclusion of my intended destination I sensed and then noticed, off to my left shoulder, a body-in-motion. As I ducked and weaved to alter the course of my motivation, this shadowy figure, uncannily, performed exactly the same manoeuvre. More strange doublings. Auspicious conjunctions, resonance and mirroring. There was little to avoid it ...an encounter! I had been spotted. *Puis la nuit*, as Baudelaire might say. 'May I help you, Sir?', smiling, the young dark haired stranger spoke, with a slight east-European accent. Ah! Of course, a shop assistant, simply offering the hand of friendship....

'A match of corporate and individual souls releases those 'E' factors (energy, enthusiasm, effort, excitement, excellence, etc)',¹³ Charles Handy is quoted as saying in Dearlove and Coomber's chapter on 'Corporate Values' (p.211). Quite clearly that handy managerial lesson from our still unready-to-hand *Financial Times Handbook* was in evidence given this enthusiastic and perfectly calibrated interception and opening gambit. Part customer service interaction, part research opportunity, part flirtation and seduction, part surveillance and control – this encounter typified many of those increasingly hybrid and genre-blurring episodes that punctuate the processes of contemporary management and work organisation. Moreover, when we are told by Vandermerwe that management must cultivate organisational resources in ways that incorporate customers as life-time citizens, where "the aim is to become more involved with the customer's experience in a defined 'market space', and to stretch relationships to gain increasing amounts of customer spend over time" (p.433), we might have reason to re-think the nature of this encounter at Suntop Media Furnishings.

13 Despite Handy's performative nomenclature that establishes *The 5 E-factors*, there must be, strictly, six 'E' factors, if 'etc' is indeed a desired motivational outcome. What this etc. might mean would surely be the cause of some confusion and consternation without the groundbreaking work of Garfinkel and his colleagues under the auspices of ethnomethodological study (see Garfinkel, 1967). Might we assume that Handy is indexing the etc. of the ethnomethodology etc., in what would then amount to a clever etc. squared (etc²), and as if Handy were anticipating this reading with a kind of a tactical, meta-touché held in reserve? Or worse, if this reference was not intended, how many 'E' factors are there if we read etc. in its conventional way? We are then faced with the prospect not only of a meta-reflexivity, but also an infinite-regress, for is there not a potentially infinite number of 'E' factors within the category 'E'? If this is the case then not only does the distinction between container and contained break down, but in addition, it becomes unclear whether we are talking about 'factors' or a 'category'. Some might speculate that Handy was signalling the possibility that 'enterprise', 'eager', 'ecstasy', and 'ebullience' might also qualify as 'E' factors, but then others would doubtless suggest 'embittered', 'edacious', 'edgy' or 'elinguation'. The meta-reflexive combined with the infinite regress suggests movement in two opposed directions at once, which barring the highly unlikely prospect of an equalisation of force, motivates an asymmetrical rhythm to the movements of analytical labour, setting off a gyratory delirium akin to the St.Vitus dance; which might suggest the influence of another kind of 'E'.

Fragmentation, proliferation, and confusion, together with devious manipulation, control, and conspiracy. Was I being targeted for recruitment, 'stretched' within the apparatus of a potential 'customer lock-on'? Was my 'spend' simply an entrance ticket to life-time employment *as a customer*? The flirtation an expedience, a seductive corporate 'come-on'? What role had the handbook played in preparing me, the reviewer, for this encounter, or what was the text's involvement in constructing the backcloth and stage props of this stage I had stumbled into? Strange reversals and paradoxes abound in this event; it is an event that marks the inauguration of a series of unfolding, multiple implications involving progressively more expansive horizons and contexts – up to the point at which, at the limit of the outer-most context of possibility, there, where the chief executive officer of Suntop Corporation fades to dissolve, yielding to the superimposition of a clandestine, international arms dealer – we return to the immediacy of the here-and-now, where 'Caroline' is simply informing us that, for our purposes, perhaps the wooden book reading lecterns would be more appropriate.

Recall that our unready-to-hand handbook, broken open on its spine, is lying prostrate upon the horizontal of a study desk awaiting the elevation of a prosthetic support. Yet, in a sense, we are discovering that, oddly, it is (always) already out-there in the high street, in the hearts and minds of managers, supervisors and shop-floor assistants, customers and researchers alike. It was almost as if it was being woven into the fabric of the everyday, perhaps, we might speculate, through a metempsychosis of sorts, or a transmigration of souls – as hinted at in the Handy quote above. The *Financial Times Handbook* appears to percolate out into the everyday-world around us, for a time evoking the possibility that all the world's a stage. It seeps out, shifting our sense of mundane phenomena, but it also recruits its 'theoreticians' into something resembling the interzone of Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). You begin to meet others who have passed through 'the handbook', as it is colloquially referenced; others seem to know you have become an initiate; hitherto unknown individuals in the street begin to smile as you pass; a nod here, a wink there. Suddenly a police siren, a turn of heads. You worry. Are they coming for you?¹⁴

Like Don Quixote we appear to have entered a world analogous to that of fictional narrative with a cast of characters more devious and capricious than the simple pataphysical absurdity of Ubu. Our doubts about our own role within its unfolding plot – what is the role of a reviewer, of a review? Insider/outsider? Disinterested observer or motivated participant? – render us acutely sensitive to forces and processes beyond the 'dimmed down' presentation secured in the orthodoxy of management and organisation. Upon realising our entry on this stage, inspired by questions such as these, one may begin to hear more signs of a coded language, of a possible Gnostic encryption, at first

14 A similar story is told in the Clifford and Marcus (1986) collection *Writing Culture*, of a doctoral student of anthropology investigating the dance and costume rituals of some remote African tribe. The chief of the tribe, on struggling to answer one question about the use of a certain type of ceremonial head-dress, dispatched one of his entourage who returns with a copy of a book written by the doctoral students' supervisor. For Foucault, it was the episteme of the renaissance in which the world was written like a book, but if we have never been modern as Latour suggests, perhaps we are never that far from more spatially or temporally remote regions of experience which linger-on as volatile layers of sediment just below the surface of our mundane, paramount everyday.

through a complex dispersal of 'signature effects'¹⁵ in the Crainer and Dearlove text (see Ulmer, 1985: 128-153; Royle, 1995: 85-123), in what comes to show all the signs of a suicide cult covertly intoning its post-human call to arms. How else is one to understand the aporias and impossibilities requested of the all-too-human, the paradox of the appeal to pull oneself up by one's bootstraps encapsulated in the ideas of a '360-degree feedback' (p.377-8), 'leveraging intellect', proposed by Quinn et al. (p.589-94), and, after all that we have learnt from Heidegger, the call to being 'just-in-time' (p.411-12)? Forget what is said on the surface of these chapters, this remains simply the Trojan horse, and, like Nietzsche's miming of the genre of nineteenth century biography in *Ecce Homo*, a necessary disguise and rationalisation in which the subversive agents of this apophatic conspiracy make use of a familiar conventional form and narrative mode within which to distribute their propaganda. It may be, of course, that some of the contributors remain unwitting participants; even the editors themselves may be only too dimly aware of the forces they serve.

Despite this proviso, look, once again, at some of the contributors names: *Des Dearlove*; *David Butcher*; *Shere Hite*; *Anthony Santomero*; and *Watts Wacker*. This must raise a modicum of doubt for even the staunchest defenders of anti-conspiracy. Love, sacrifice, heavenly heights, the Virgin Mary, the waste and sin of *watts wacker*, an updated, ironic and *postmodernised* (?) version of Rousseau's confessional biographer: can we not see here the traces of a Christian allegory? Only thinly disguised remains this missionary zeal in the section on Marketing¹⁶ – *and marketing, of all places!* – where we are invited to consider 'corporate religion', the company as 'king' (Cram, pp.457-65), and the 'Ten commandments for a brand with a future', written by a one 'Thomas Gad' (repeat the surname a couple of times and the homonymic play soon reveals itself),¹⁷ the authenticity of whom must surely be in doubt, particularly since the biographical section on the contributors to this volume tells us he (she, they, or even 'it' – who can really tell?) has recently merged to become 'Differ' (p.736). Curious, indeed. The Derridean overtones can surely be no mistake, and the confusion between profits and prophets generated by contemporary corporate organisation never more obvious. A shape shifting

15 In this respect consider the play of 'Crainer' and 'Dearlove' that runs throughout this volume. Through signature effects and homonymous slide 'Crainer' and 'Dearlove' are made characters in the drama of this *Financial Times Handbook*, but one can only prise open this dimension of *organising*, of surreptitious seduction and recruitment, of organisational consolidation, when one is prepared to submit to interpretation the counter-transferential dove-tail of one's own signature effects. 'Crainer' appears on stage at a number of junctures, but always as that analytical over-reach, as in a *cranial* transgression, or as a crane that is stretching – *craining*, so to speak, to carry or transfer heavy loads. As one of the editors a 'Crainer' might be thought of as the one who drives or controls the *crane*. And a crane is certainly needed to lift the weight of this ironically titled 'handbook'. 'Dearlove', on the other hand, seems to play the role of partner, as in the good cop/bad cop double act, the velvet g(love) to the iron fist, or soft HRM in league with hard HRM. The Handbook appears then, however disguised, denied, or displaced, as a collection of love-letters written by the authors to themselves – an offering, an export, a projection, or an unfolding of self and its possibilities in a quest for discovery. As we know, for Montaigne, all essays were really love letters to the author.

16 See also sections on making 'the leap of faith' (p.189-90); 'the quality gospel' (p.389-94); 'thought leadership' (p.612); 'inspirational mission and vision' (p.636); instructions on the 'formation of international joint-ventures' (p.708ff); and, 'creating a global mindset' (p.721-24).

17 At the risk of over-labouring these efforts at transparency, recall in U.S. and U.K. slang the use of Thomas to refer to the phallus, and Mellors use of this term in Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

deity deferred and differed, apparently. What is really significant and taking place in this handbook, then, seems to be what is *not-said*, that which lies *behind* and *between* the words, in suggestion and innuendo. A sophisticated, apophantic allegory. Waiting for Gadot, perhaps.

The End of Review and the Beginning of the End: Management

We are being made a problem in stepping through this text. Things are beginning to fray; structure and direction dissolving. We have been tracing here a pataphysical slide into meta-forces and metaphors, an entry into a strange parallel ontology that appears to be seeping into the warp and weft of our own, slowly consuming and corroding our sense-making apparatus. This oblique ambulation, only partially recounted here, has no doubt over-stretched the possibility and credulity of review as our theatrical-becoming generates a scattering of phenomena into ephemera and larval disorganisation.¹⁸ That I fear that this has been only a partial return to the communicative orthodoxy of the scholarly review provides a measure of hope that there is still some sense to be made from the fragments of *rear-view* presented here.

Crainer and Dearlove, together with their compatriots, seem to speak out of and towards a swelling, tumescent 'interzone'; an alien intelligence from an organisation yet-to-come, it sends out envoys and portals that are opening up all around us like rabbit-holes, vacuoles and pock marks that slowly granulate and dissolve the fabric of what is still left of 'paramount' reality. We have to think against ourselves if we hope to achieve some kind of understanding or settlement with this alien invasion, for it is already happening and you don't know what it is, do you Mr Jones? We will be excused for the histrionic tone, the hyperbole and bombast, for we are all unprepared and immature passengers in this coming-organisation. Bereft of all co-ordinate we are compelled to invent what Deleuze and Guattari (1994) call 'conceptual personae' to help navigate what is to all intents and purposes an 'ambulatory automatism', a recollection of the somnambulant *rear-view* rather than a re-view in the traditional sense.¹⁹ You will realise what a relief and achievement it is then to end this review with the exclamation: *Management? ...Whatever.*

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18 We write generate, but it is, equally, never clear if this process describes an *active* generation or an opening onto, a revelation of an always-already decaying of organisational *subject-matter*.

19 We can only hope that the 'rear-viewer' is not confused with that perennial academic problem of navel-gazing, or its rather more crude variation. However, we may have to court this danger if we are to make any head way with this text – and not simply in a *psychoanalytical* way.

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